

Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission Minutes of Meeting, June 8, 1999

Present: Commissioners -

Kathryn Eckert, Advisor, National Trust for Michigan
Reverend Robert Langseth, representing the Houghton County Board of Commissioners
Larry Lankton, Michigan Technological University
Paul Lehto, Supervisor, Calumet Township
Tom Nemacheck, representing Governor John Engler
Clyde Raasio, representing Quincy and Franklin Townships

National Park Service -

Lynn Bjorkman, Community Planner
Joseph Balachowski, Historical Architect
Frank Fiala, KNHP Superintendent

Recording Secretary -

Lisa Dwyer

Absent: John Garber, the Village of Calumet

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission was held, Tuesday, June 8, 1999, at 8:30 a.m. in Calumet, Michigan at park headquarters.

Review of Minutes

The minutes of the March 2, 1999, meeting were approved on a motion by Reverend Langseth and seconded by Clyde Raasio.

Superintendent's Report

Frank Fiala reported that the Park Service now has ownership of the Union Building. The building will require substantial renovation. Fiala hopes to have a report ready to submit to the Park Service at the start of the fiscal year October 1, 1999 to request repair and rehabilitation money for the building. Public meetings will be held to discuss possible uses for the building.

The park has purchased the Jack Foster collection. Part of the collection includes historic photographs taken by A. F. Isler. The park has begun reproducing the photographs, some of which are currently on exhibit in park headquarters. Fiala envisions using a gallery of historic photographs as a visitor exhibit for an area in the Union building. Gene La Rochelle, Calumet Village board member, along with a group of volunteers, organized the exhibit, which features Isler photographs. La Rochelle gave a slide presentation of some of the photographs at the meeting.

An interpreter/curator will be added to the park staff this fall. One of the first things the new interpreter/curator will do is to work on the accession of the Jack Foster collection. Computer software and hardware will be purchased to facilitate accession of the collection.

A two-year trainee will be added to the KNHP park staff in the fall to train for an administrative officer position as well. Then that person will be placed at KNHP after the 2-year training period.

A new part-time park employee has been hired to do janitorial and yard work.

A new, networked state-of-the-art copier has been purchased as well as a new phone system for park headquarters.

A \$5,200 Challenge Cost Share grant has been received to help fund repair work at the Firemen's Museum. The National Historic Landmark program gave the park \$6,900 last year, which was invested in a Michigan Tech GIS program for Quincy Hill. That program funding has been increased to \$15,000 this year according to Fiala. KNHP provided funds for a porch renovation of the First Congressional Church of Lake Linden, owned by the Houghton County Historical Society.

Fiala spoke of recent visitors he has had. A graduate student from Colorado State was in the area recently to work on an interpretive landscape architect program for the Quincy Mine Hoist Association. A Park Service regional solicitor from the Denver park service office was here to discuss several issues with Fiala. Park staff from the Omaha Lands office came to check on the purchase of the Union building by the park.

At the previous KNHP Advisory Commission meeting, Fiala was asked to prepare a letter on behalf of the Advisory Commission to send out to local units of government, private individuals, and anyone who has jurisdiction or is responsible for the depletion of the poor rock piles. The letter states that some poor rock piles are significant to the historical landscape and should be left undisturbed. Larry Lankton and Kathryn Eckert prepared a statement on the depletion of the poor rock piles, which will also be a part of the letter. On a motion by Reverend Langseth and seconded by Kathryn Eckert, motion carried that the letter be sent out.

Fiala distributed information on the Michigan Historic Preservation tax credit program. He also distributed copies of a news release by the National Trust for Historic Preservation requesting that preservationists let their congressional members know that they support the resurrection of the federal Historic Homeownership Assistance Act.

A news release from Bart Stupak regarding the 200th birthday of the Library of Congress was distributed. As a part of the Library's birthday activities, it has initiated a "Local Legacies" program whereby special events will be documented with photographs, videos, and festival materials and then submitted to the Library of Congress. The annual reunion at Central Mine will be documented and sent to Bart Stupak who will in turn submit it to the Library of Congress.

Fiala reported that the bill to establish the Advisory Commissions operating powers has been pulled from consideration by the legislative committee. Bart Stupak's legislative assistant, Justin Zimmerman, has notified Fiala he will be working with the legislative committee to encourage that they consider the bill. The Advisory Commission decided that it would be prudent for each commissioner to send a letter in support of the bill to the committee members.

Hitch, Inc. is currently in the process of conducting an engineering study of the structural integrity of the Quincy machine shop at a cost of \$26,000. The park awarded a bid to Cusack's Masonry Repair of Hubbardston, Michigan, for \$114,160 to begin to do some repair work to the Blacksmith Shop.

Fiala distributed copies of the correspondence pertaining to the issues between KNHP and the City of Hancock regarding the design of Campus Drive, the Campus Drive street lighting project, and the First Avenue Extension project. A compromise was reached between the city and the park regarding the distance between the placement of the streetlights on Campus Drive. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and Rural Development put ten stipulations on the City of Hancock should the city continue with the First Avenue Extension. One of those is an archaeological survey. Fiala distributed copies of a draft proposal to do the survey relating to the First Street Extension project and submitted by Dr. Patrick E. Martin of Michigan Tech's Social Sciences Department for \$26,704. Fiala commented that had the survey been done a year ago, it would have only cost \$1,500. The City of Hancock had given the park the responsibility of recommending the color the watertank should be painted. The park commissioned research to be done through Michigan Tech to determine the original color of the first water tank. The finding was that the original color was black. The City of Hancock at first disagreed on the color recommended by the park but an agreement was finally reached and the tank color is to be black.

Fiala distributed copies of a letter he has sent to Brian Conway, State Historic Preservation Officer, regarding the recent demolition of the Quincy Hill bathhouse owned by Portage Health Systems (PHS). Fiala explained that he had just spent the last six months working with PHS in order to craft an interpretive display utilizing the foundation of that building and the plans for the design of the PHS hospital sign. Fiala added that the park has spent about \$1,000 into a mock-up of what could be done at the corner of the access road to the hospital, where the bathhouse was located. The bathhouse was destroyed without notification given to the park. The letter states that the destruction of the bathhouse and other recent developmental projects occurring within the Quincy National Historic Landmark (NHL) are having an adverse impact to the NHL causing harm to the historic resources there. Fiala has asked that Conway set up a meeting with all interested parties in order to determine the future of Quincy unit of KNHP. He has asked that the State Historic Preservation Officer include the office of the governor of the state of Michigan, the office of the Michigan Attorney General, QMHA, and the Advisory Commission in the invitation to the meeting. Kathryn Eckert suggested that the National Trust for Historic Preservation be invited, too. Fiala once again stated that at no time has the park ever opposed the construction of the hospital or the high school. However, the law requires that there be consultation in order to mitigate any adverse impacts that any projects could have on historical resources.

The Ranger III is being rededicated on August 19th at 11 am. It went through refurbishing last winter. On the afternoon of August 19th a ceremony will be held to celebrate the acquisition of the Union building, the first property purchased by KNHP. The records in the building will be donated to the park. The Keweenaw Printing Company was housed in the Union building, and Fiala has recently learned that the printing company equipment is in storage and available to put on display as an exhibit in the Union building.

Community Planner's Report

Lynn Bjorkman continues to work on historic district development for Calumet village and Calumet Township. She has worked with the Calumet Village Historic District Study Committee and historic district consultant, Jane Busch, to complete an historic district study committee report for a commercial and civic historic district for the village. That report is now on public review. She has also been working with Jane Busch to complete a proposal for a historic district for Calumet Township in the C&H industrial area. Bjorkman has also spent some time providing support in an outreach program to Donna Zimmerman, a graduate student from the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, who is working on her masters degree doing research on employee housing in the area.

Historical Architect

Josef Balachowski has been working on the renovation of the Firemen's Museum. He continues to work on construction documents for the Keweenaw Heritage Center. He is also working on the plans for relocation of the Seaman Mineral Museum to the Blacksmith shop and the Machine shop. He will be in charge of the renovation of the Union building, also.

Reports and Comments from the Commissioners

Kathryn Eckert reported that the Americana Foundation awarded \$17,000 to the Houghton County Historical Society for the acquisition of the Mary Chase Stratton Perry House in Hancock. Mary Perry was a famous American ceramist and creator of Pewabic pottery. Eckert feels that the house would be an excellent interpretive site for women's history.

Tom Nemacheck inquired about the status of cooperating sites. Fiala said that once the Advisory Commission gets its operating powers, a more formal relationship between the park and cooperating sites can be established. Nemacheck said that, according to reports and inquiries from around the state, visitors will be coming to the area in record numbers this summer.

Larry Lankton reported on stained glass window restoration at St. Anne's Church where the Keweenaw Heritage Center is to be located. The cost of the window restoration will be approximately \$140,000. The

Heritage Center is \$19,000 short of that goal. Work has begun on the windows. Lankton cautioned that since the Union building is across the street from the Keweenaw Heritage Center, there should be coordination between the park and the Heritage Center in order to prevent duplication of interpretive themes in each place. The Heritage Center is tentatively planning its exhibits. The theme is to be called, "Steeple and Storefronts: Life in the Mine Towns." A recent undergraduate class of Lankton's worked on a planning twelve exhibits on the social history of the mine towns. Lankton added that the Union building and the Heritage Center should make a great focal point being located at the head of Fifth Street in Calumet. The Heritage Center has applied for a \$500,000 grant with the Michigan Department of Budget for additional restoration work to be done.

Lankton spoke of the demolition of the bathhouse. Lankton said it seems that many don't recognize the value of the northwest side of U.S. 41. Standing ruins are needed so visitors can compare what is there now to historic photographs in order to evoke the mining era. Lankton recommended that the Advisory Commission reestablish its preservation committee which could keep track of sites and structures that need to be preserved and also lend its formal support to Fiala's efforts to preserve historic sites and structures. Lankton made a motion to send a letter to PHS stating that "the KNHP Advisory Commission regrets PHS's unilateral and unannounced decision to demolish the historic Quincy bath house, an act which we find detrimental to the Quincy NHL and the Quincy unit of the KNHP." Kathryn Eckert seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Chairman's Report

Paul Lehto said that Calumet Township accepted an offer from Moyle Contracting for \$2,950 to supply a crane and manpower to stabilize the Superior Boiler House smokestack on Mine Street. Lehto said the plans are being made to set up a display to represent the Oddfellows Lodge since it was a very important part of the area at one time.

Reverend Langseth reported that Larry Lankton's lecture series, "Four Evenings of Copper Country History," raised \$2600 for the Keweenaw Heritage Center. The proceeds will go toward the stained glass window restoration project at St. Anne's. Reverend Langseth commented on what he sees has happened regarding opposing visions for the park. One vision is that the history of the area is of such national significance that it should be preserved and the other is that it is not and can be remembered without being preserved. One vision is that a national park is a benefit to the cultural, economic and social development of the peninsula. The opposing vision is that this preservation is a drawback to entrepreneurial efforts. Langseth said he is calling for an end to the "war" of opposing visions and that he for one is ready to work on hammering out a plan where all can work together and merge the two visions. The Advisory Commission needs to show its support and back Fiala formally.

Clyde Raasio spoke of the Hardscrabble area saying that he looked over that area and concurs with Fiala that historic house foundations have been bulldozed there. Raasio said he is pleased to see that the Quincy Mine Hoist Association has been able to acquire some properties on the northwest side of U.S. 41 across from the Quincy mineshaft. Raasio suggested that the Advisory Commission, as a whole should meet with the parties who most impact the northwest side of U.S. 41. Raasio said he is concerned about the fate of the Quincy pay office.

Amy Wisti, of Congressman Bart Stupak's office, said she has the list of members on the legislative committee designated to consider issuing the Advisory Commission its operating powers. The World Wide Web site, "thomas," is keeping track of the progress of the bill to give the commission its operating powers. If the Advisory Commission would like to be a co-sponsor with Bart Stupak or even act individually, to give support to the Historic Homeowners Association act, please notify her. She will also be discussing the demolition of the bath house with Stupak.

Fiala introduced Doug Barnard, superintendent of Isle Royale National Park, adding that he has extremely helpful in advising Fiala on park activities. Barnard praised Fiala for the good job he is doing supervising KNHP. Barnard urged the commissioners to keep track on the progress of the bill to give the commission its operating powers. Barnard advised the commissioners not to wait for the State Historic Preservation Officer to call a

meeting regarding the bathhouse issue. He suggested that the commissioners organize the meeting. He stated that the National Park Service cannot, will not, and should not do everything for KNHP. KNHP is a partnership park. It must be a grass roots effort that should be supported by private citizens as well as the local units of government. At a recent meeting with the City Council of Hancock, Barnard said he told the city that if damage occurs to the National Historic Landmark, it could lose its NHL designation. It is a finite thing that can be lost and if it is lost, the park may lose Quincy unit. He encouraged the commissioners and other concerned parties to talk to the media. The bathhouse may have been able to be saved with citizen participation. If citizens are apathetic to this partnership park, the park will be lost. The damage to the Hardscrabble area, the bathhouse, and the First Avenue extension is cumulative and can add up to a significant loss.

Sue Cone suggested that the letter to the State Historic Preservation Officer requesting a meeting be widely circulated to various agencies in order that it is understood by as many as possible to what is going on. She thanked Paul Lehto for his effort in preventing the closure of the Calumet Armory. Lehto explained that there are two issues regarding the armory. The closure of building itself and the loss of the Calumet unit of the National Guard.

Ed Yarbrough, manager of QMHA, spoke of the bathhouse saying that nothing had been agreed upon between the hospital, the park, and the QMHA as far as demolition of the bath use. He felt that everyone was moving toward agreeing to bring it down to its foundation but not its complete erasure. QMHA was able to get a year's lease on the Quincy pay office from the Quincy Development Corporation. The George Wright Society is currently occupying the pay office. QMHA hopes to eventually purchase the pay office. The association purchased a number of lots across from the Seaman Mineral Museum project and the Quincy Franklin Fire Department. There are three historical homes on these lots. Yarbrough spoke of some of the QMHA budget explaining that it has had to do some long-term maintenance in the mine itself spending about \$20,000 this year and \$10,000 the previous year. This stabilization was necessary for safety reasons. The QMHA building and grounds committee felt that it could not put any money toward stabilization of the bathhouse because of this, but would have certainly lent it support in other ways to help save the bathhouse. QMHA is working closely with the park on the plan for the Seaman Mineral Museum but it has its limitations and which are mostly financial. There is a real need for funding and QMHA did submit a number of grants this year. It did receive an USDA grant to recap two mine shafts. The grant is contingent on making the caps bat friendly in order to allow bats access to the shafts.

Stan Dyl, Director of the Seaman Mineral Museum, spoke of the value and importance of the historical structures of the area as evidence of the rich heritage that we all share here. He encouraged the commissioners as well as friends of preservation to communicate this feeling. He said it is a matter of educating the public to the value of saving the buildings.

Clyde Raasio commented that there has to be room for new growth, not only preservation, but residential development and possibly some commercial development in certain areas. Eckert added that direction is needed as to where it occurs and how it looks. Langseth said "we need to aggressively search out contributors to the park effort."

Fiala announced that reporter, Paula Pintar, is leaving the Daily Mining Gazette and Fiala gave praise to her reporting of park events.

Fiala asked if the commissioners would consider meeting occasionally at a site other than park headquarters in order to attract a larger audience. The commissioners agreed.

Next meeting will be held Tuesday, August 24, 1999, at 8:30 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Lisa A. Dwyer
Departmental Coordinator
Department of Social Sciences
Michigan Technological University
Houghton, MI 49931-1295

Phone: 906/487-2113
Fax: 906/487-2468